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CHILE:

Church Encourages Opposition To Unite

The agreement by 11 political parties to work together for an early return to democracy in Chile will put President Pinochet further on the defensive.

[REDACTED] the unprecedented accord—which was worked out under the auspices of the leader of the Chilean Catholic Church—calls for an end to the current state of emergency, restoration of political freedoms, and a new law for direct presidential and congressional elections. [REDACTED]

The parties range from moderate left to moderate right. They have compromised on the contentious issue of banning totalitarian parties by leaving it to a proposed new constitutional tribunal. They implicitly accept the validity of the constitution of 1980 but call for major amendments to it. [REDACTED]

Comment: Disarray among Pinochet's moderate opponents in recent months has enabled him to ignore their overtures. The new accord will be endorsed by a broad spectrum of Chileans and may force him to be more responsive. [REDACTED]

Pinochet regards most of the plan as unacceptable and will insist on proscribing Marxist parties and adhering strictly to the protracted timetable provided for under the constitution. Nevertheless, he may face increasing pressure from senior military officers to be more accommodating. They are worried over the debilitating effects of a scandal involving police death squads and squabbling among the security services. [REDACTED]